

Remarks on Signing the Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004 in
Des Moines, Iowa
October 4, 2004

Thank you all. Thanks for coming today. Thank you all. Please be seated. Mr. Chairman—[laughter]—you probably think I've come here to sign an important piece of legislation. Actually, I'm here for a different reason. The South Lawn of the White House has a lot of grass—[laughter]—I'm looking for somebody to mow it. [Laughter] And so Mr. Chairman, you shall now be known as "Grass-mower." [Laughter] And by the way, when you're through using that car—[laughter]—I've always liked an old Olds. [Laughter] I appreciate you being here, Mr. Chairman; proud to call you friend.

Thanks for being here as well. It's a beautiful day here in Iowa. Iowa is such a beautiful place.

Today, with my signature, Federal law will extend vital tax relief for millions of American families and add momentum to our growing economy. Today here in Des Moines, Iowa, the Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004 becomes the law of the land, and I appreciate you being here to watch it.

And I really do appreciate working with Mr. Chairman. He's had a remarkable tenure as chairman of the Finance Committee in the Senate. We have accomplished a lot together. I appreciate other Members of the congressional delegation who are with us today, the chairman of the Budget Committee in the House of Representatives, Jim Nussle—thank you for coming, Jim. Jim Leach, Congressman Jim Leach is with us. I appreciate my friend Jim Leach being here, as well as Congressman Tom Latham. I'm honored they are here.

Not here is head of the Ways and Means Committee in the House of Representatives, Chairman Bill Thomas of California. I appreciate his hard work on this bill, and I appreciate him working with Chuck

Grassley to get the bill done. I also want to thank minority leader in the House of Representatives on the—in the Ways and Means Committee, Charlie Rangel, Democrat from New York, for working on this bill, as well as Senator Max Baucus, Democrat from Montana, for working with Chuck Grassley on the bill as well. I want to thank all the Members of Congress who worked hard to get this bill done.

I appreciate members of the ex-Governors club who've joined us today. I happen to be a member of that club as well. I'm a fellow member. [Laughter] Terry Branstad and Bob Ray have served your State so very well, and I appreciate their friendship. And I'm glad Billie Ray is with Bob. I'll tell Mother and Dad hello for both of you. Appreciate you coming.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I particularly want to thank the president and CEO of the YMCA, Vernon Delpesce, as well as Dave Hoak, who's the chairman of the Y, for letting us use this facility for this bill signing ceremony.

I want to thank the Patterson family who is with us here. They're beneficiaries of the tax relief. I spent some time with them backstage. I'll be speaking about another family here in a minute.

The law I sign this morning comes at just the right time for America. Some of the tax relief provisions we passed over the last 3 years were set to expire at the end of 2004. Unless we acted, a family of four earning \$40,000 would have seen their Federal income taxes rise by more than \$900. That would have been a burden for hard-working families across America. And it would have been a setback for our economy.

Today we're acting to keep vital tax relief in place. The bipartisan bill I sign today

extends the \$1,000 child tax credit, the marriage penalty relief, and the expanded 10-percent tax bracket. It also protects millions of families from having to pay the alternative minimum tax in 2005. That tax was designed over three decades ago to make sure wealthy Americans pay their fair share of taxes, but now it affects middle-income families. This bill will also increase the child credit refunds for almost 7 million low-income families in the 2004 tax year.

Overall, 94 million Americans will have a lower tax bill next year, including 70 million women and 38 million families with children. The money they keep will make it easier to save for their retirement or their children's education, invest in a home or a small business or pay off credit card debts.

One of those families is the Hintz family from Clive, Iowa. Thank you all for coming. It's a special day for Mike and Sharla, not because they're with the President or with Chairman Grassley, but because it's their 13th wedding anniversary. Theirs is a typical story. See, last year they received a child tax credit check for \$1,600 for their four children. And under all the tax relief we've passed, they saved about \$2,800 last year. With this extra money they bought a wood-burning stove to reduce their home heating costs. They made a decision for their family. They also made home repairs and improvements. They took the family on a vacation to Minnesota. Next year when you get your check, you may want to come to Texas. *[Laughter]*

Without the tax bill I'm signing today, the Hintzes would have paid \$1,200 more in Federal taxes next year. Think about that. Here's a family of four, working hard to raise their kids; the money would have been going out of their pocket. I believe they can spend that \$1,200 better than the Federal Government can.

This legislation will have good effects throughout the economy. The tax relief we passed in 2001 has helped our economy overcome a lot of challenges, a stock mar-

ket decline, a recession, terrorist attacks, and war. By extending key portions of that tax relief, we will leave close to \$50 billion next year in the hands of the people who earned it, and that money will help keep the economy moving forward and result in even more new jobs for American workers.

This act of Congress is essential, but it's only a start. Over the next few years, if we fail to take further action, the tax relief will expire and Federal income taxes will go up for every American who pays them. For the sake of our families and small businesses and farmers, investors, and seniors, we need to make all the tax relief permanent.

We need to make sure the death tax doesn't come back to life. We need to keep the tax relief we enacted for investors and small businesses. We need to reform the Tax Code to make it simpler, easier to understand, and pro-growth. To keep the economy growing, we need to reduce the burden of regulation on small businesses. To keep our economy growing, we need to end the junk lawsuits that keep entrepreneurs from creating new jobs. To keep the economy growing, we need an energy plan to make sure America is less dependent on foreign sources of energy, by using alternative uses of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. We need to open up foreign markets for our products and to continue to ensure that other countries play by the rules. We need spending discipline in our Nation's Capital.

I look forward to working with the Congress to achieve all these goals. When we keep taxes low and trust our American families with their own money, they spend it far more wisely than we can. And when they do, they make the American economy stronger.

I appreciate the Members of Congress who are here today. I wish they'd come up and join me as, in the great city of Des Moines, Iowa, I sign into law the Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 p.m. at the South Suburban YMCA. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Terry E. Branstad of Iowa; former Gov. Robert D. Ray of Iowa and his wife, Billie; and Vernon Delpesce, executive director, and David Hoak, chief

volunteer officer, YMCA of Greater Des Moines, IA. H.R. 1308, approved October 4, was assigned Public Law No. 108-311. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion in Clive, Iowa October 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for being here. Please be seated. We've got to get started. I've got some things I want to tell you.

First thing I'm going to tell you is I'm here asking for the vote in Clive, Iowa. I'm enjoying this campaign. It gives me a chance to get out among the people and tell people what I believe and where I stand and where I'm going to lead this country for the next 4 years. I'm here also to ask for your help. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Iowa and win a great victory in November. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

They tell me I'm the first sitting President ever to visit Clive. I don't know what took all the other ones so long to get here—[*laughter*—but thanks for being here. I wish Laura were here. Imagine this conversation: “Will you marry me?” “Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech.” [*Laughter*] I said, “Okay.” [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise, because when people see Laura, they see a strong, compassionate, fine, fine First Lady. I think in the course of the campaign you have to tell people why they should vote for you; that's what I'm here to do. But perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Today I'm going to talk to some of your fellow citizens about why our policies make sense, and I'd like to answer some questions if you have some. Before I do that,

I do want to introduce some people traveling with me. First, I do want to thank the next Congressman from the Third Congressional District, Stan Thompson. He's a good Member, I hope you put him in office. I'm here to tell you he ought to be the next United States Congressman.

I appreciate Members of the U.S. Congress from the Iowa delegation for coming. From the east side of the State, Jim Nussle and Jim Leach, two really fine friends. And I appreciate you all being here. Thanks for coming. Leach is a longtime Member, one of the most decent men you'll ever meet. Chairman Nussle is the chairman of the Budget Committee, making sure that the Iowa taxpayers' monies is well-spent in Washington. I also want to thank Tom Latham from northwest Iowa for being here today. Congressman, thanks for coming. Proud you're here.

And I just signed an important piece of legislation making a lot of the tax relief—extending a lot of the tax relief for 5 years. And I was able to stand on stage with the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Chuck Grassley. He's a good man. He went back to Washington. I told him if he'd suffer through one of my speeches, I'd give him a ride back. [*Laughter*] But he's frugal. [*Laughter*] I also told the people, I said, “I'm really getting to be good friends with Chuck Grassley, for a reason. The south lawn of the White House”—[*laughter*]—“is mighty big, and we're looking for a good mower.” [*Laughter*]